NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 10-90) MEHIDOLINIOS

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.0. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

NPS Form 10-900-a (8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number: 7 Page: 1

Longwood Louisa County, VA

Summary Description

Located in Louisa County approximately one mile east of Waldrop, the Longwood property retains approximately 120 of its original 630-acres in the vicinity of Gordonsville, Virginia. The house is sited about one-half mile off State Route 22 in a large, elevated clearing that is bounded by wooded, gently sloping topography. A small pond and a number of large oak trees surround the house, which is accessible from the road via a long gravel driveway that terminates at the house in a large roundabout. Constructed circa 1859 by George Loyall Gordon, Longwood is a two-story, frame, Greek Revival-style house with a rectangular massed plan, low-pitched hipped roof and two interior brick chimneys. The interior of the house also incorporates Greek Revival details in its trim configuration and mantelpieces. Today, Longwood retains the character-defining features of its original Greek Revival design and the charm of a rural historic property. Other than the installation of modern plumbing and mechanical systems, and the loss of its original front and rear porches, the house has undergone very little alteration since its construction. In addition to the main house, four small frame outbuildings, two wells, and a modern swimming pool are located on the property.

Detailed Description

Longwood is a frame dwelling constructed on a raised brick basement that measures approximately 46 feet by 32 feet in size, with the primary elevation having the larger dimension. The basement walls are constructed using a 1:5 American bond brick pattern; the exterior frame walls are finished with painted weatherboards; and the low-pitched hipped roof is covered in asphalt shingles. Roofless wood porches supported by brick piers extend the full-length of the front and rear elevations at the first floor level, and a small, second floor balcony is centered above the front entrance. The front porch and balcony balustrades have decorative turned balusters with large square newels. The rear porch is constructed of plain wood decking material. Including the chimneys, Longwood stands nearly 40 feet in height.

The façade and rear elevation of the house are comprised of three bays, and the side elevations are comprised of two bays. Each elevation of the house is symmetrically arranged, and all window and door openings are framed with a wide, three-part band of trim. Doorways, centrally located on the façade at the first and second floor levels, consist of paired, four-panel doors framed with a narrow band of sidelights, while the main entrance features a slightly more elaborate architrave that includes a transom. In both cases the doors and glazing are recessed behind the front wall creating a three-dimensional effect that, in turn, makes the doorways appear as more prominent features of the façade. Double-hung windows with six-over-six sash flank the central doorways, and are the typical window style on all elevations at the first and second floor levels. The windows on the façade, however, are much taller than those on either the side or rear elevations. Smaller casement windows are located at the basement level.

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Longwood Louisa County, VA

Description (continued)

The rear elevation of the house has centrally located doorways with paired doors at the first floor and basement levels. Neither sidelights nor transoms are included in the doorways on the rear elevation; however, a narrow, recessed wood panel is located above the door in the architrave of the first floor doorway. A small flight of brick steps descends below grade at the rear of the house to provide access to the basement.

The low-pitched hipped roof features a prominent cornice line representative of the classical entablature, and is a common characteristic of Greek Revival domestic architecture. Large, Italianate brackets and a wide, continuous band of trim further emphasize the scale of the cornice line, while slender corner boards adorn each elevation. Large, interior brick chimneys project from the hipped roof on either side of the ridgeline. The chimneys have recessed panels on each side of the shaft, and corbelled caps.

The interior of Longwood is also symmetrically arranged, and features a center hall plan with two rooms on either side. The main hall is divided into two separate spaces by large double doors. The main hall consists of an entrance vestibule in the front of the house that provides access to the two front rooms; and a rear stair hall that provides access to the back rooms, and to the upper and lower floors. Consistent with the Greek Revival style of architecture, the interior decorative embellishments are elegantly simple in character and are reserved for the main stair, mantelpieces, doors, and windows. The interior flooring is constructed of heart pine planks, and the walls are finished with plaster.

The main stair has a simple round hand rail with delicately turned balusters and a large turned newel at the bottom of the stair. The open well stairs³ ascend from the main hall to a small landing, where another smaller flight of stairs climbs to the second floor hall. The curvilinear carriage of the main stair is adorned with decorative scrolled brackets. A smaller, enclosed stair below the main stair provides access to the basement.

There are a total of nine fireplaces in the house. One fireplace is located in each of the four rooms on the first and second floors, and one fireplace is located in the basement. Decorative wood mantelpieces with slender pilasters and flat entablatures adorn the fireplaces on the first and second floors.

With the exception of the trim work in the front rooms on the first floor, the configuration of the interior door and window trim matches the three-part trim found on the exterior of the house. The front rooms on the first floor, including the entrance vestibule, have a slightly more decorative door and window casing that includes corner blocks, suggesting that these spaces were of greater importance than other areas of the house. Interior doors consist of six-panel doors on the first floor, and four-panel doors on the second floor.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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Longwood Louisa County, VA

Description (continued)

Originally a 630-acre working farm built by George Loyall Gordon circa 1859, the Longwood property initially consisted of the main house, several barns, stables and other outbuildings. In its original configuration, the house had a two-story, five bay, full-facade porch with square columns—a distinctive, yet uncommon feature of Greek Revival houses in Virginia. A similar one-story porch was also located on the rear elevation. As a result of many years of neglect during the first half of the 20th-century, the original porches and most of the outbuildings have long since disappeared. However, plans are underway by the current owner to fully restore the original porches based on evidence available from historic photographs. Resources currently located on the property include one non-contributing house; three non-contributing sheds; one contributing historic brick well located to the east of the house; one non-contributing well located to the south of the house; and one non-contributing modern swimming pool.

Statement of Significance

Constructed circa 1859, Longwood embodies the classical architectural features and characteristics associated with the Greek Revival style of architecture, which was dominant during the mid-19th century in America. The Greek Revival style is considered by many to be the first genuinely American architectural style, and was widely popularized at the time by carpenter's guides and pattern books that illustrated fashionable designs and recommended appropriate construction materials. Longwood is a product of the philosophy and aesthetic ideals associated with this important period in American history. Today, Longwood remains situated on just over 120-acres of rolling countryside in rural Louisa County, Virginia. Although Longwood is not located within the boundaries of downtown Gordonsville proper, its context is closely linked with the town's rich history, as well as that of the historic Green Springs area of Louisa County. Longwood meets National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent, well-preserved example of domestic Greek Revival architecture in a rural setting.

Historical Background

The town of Gordonsville was incorporated in 1870; however, the town's legacy actually began almost a century prior to this date when proprietor Nathaniel Gordon purchased a plantation at the crossroads of The Fredericksburg Great Road and The Richmond Road in 1787. Soon afterward Nathaniel Gordon built a tavern on this land, which served as a welcome refuge for weary travelers by providing food and lodging for those traveling between Charlottesville, Orange, Louisa and Richmond. By 1813, Nathaniel Gordon's tavern and its outbuildings had become known as Gordonsville. During the 1850's the town was transformed into a thriving transportation hub with the coming of two major railroads, which soon brought increasing amounts of people to the area to live and work. Today, Gordonsville continues to function as a small rural town and has retained many significant historic buildings that are now located in the Gordonsville Historic District.¹⁰

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Longwood Louisa County, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

It was during the period of Gordonsville's prosperity from the railroad that George Loyall Gordon purchased 630-acres of land in the nearby Green Springs region of Louisa County. George Gordon was a lawyer¹¹ and descendent of the locally prominent Gordon family. He was the son of Major General William Fitzhugh Gordon, ¹² a former member of the United States House of Representatives and cousin of Nathaniel Gordon, ¹³ founder of Gordonsville. George Gordon constructed Longwood shortly after acquiring the land in 1859. In addition to the main house, he also built several barns, stables and other outbuildings on the property, which was originally owned by his father. ¹⁴ He also cultivated a large part of the land for a brief period of time. ¹⁵ George Gordon resided at Longwood with his wife, Mary Long Gordon, and their five children ¹⁶ until joining the Confederate army and heading off to wage battle in the Civil War. He was later killed at the Battle of Malvern Hill on July 1, 1862. ¹⁷ Following his death, his wife and children went to live with her family in North Carolina for several years. Mary Gordon eventually returned to Longwood in 1870, where she lived with her children until her death in 1876. ¹⁸ Longwood remained the property of the Gordon family until it was sold in 1921. ¹⁹

Longwood embodies the identifying features associated with the Greek Revival style of architecture, and is an excellent domestic example of this architectural style in the context of a rural setting. The Greek Revival style of architecture reached the height of its popularity in America during the decades from 1830 to 1850. In the southern states, however, it occurs less commonly through 1860. Architectural forms evocative of Greek democracy were thought to be especially appropriate during this period as a young America rejected its traditional ties to England. Common features of Greek Revival domestic architecture include a low-pitched hipped roof; prominent cornice line emphasized with a wide, divided band of trim, and a narrow line of transom and sidelights around doors. All of these character-defining features are evident in the design and construction of Longwood.

In addition to having these more common Greek Revival features, Longwood also exhibits features observed in only a small percentage of Greek Revival style houses, including the use of large, Italianate brackets to further enhance the prominent cornice line. The use of Italianate brackets in Greek Revival domestic architecture became fashionable after 1850 as the Italianate style slowly emerged as an alternative to classical styles that had previously dominated domestic architecture in America. Even so, because the occurrence of Greek Revival architecture had declined by this time in most areas, Italianate brackets are an unusual detail to find in rural Virginia architecture. Interestingly, brackets that are notably similar to those seen at Longwood can be found in A.J. Downing's, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, which served as the design guide for numerous houses throughout the eastern United States during the mid-19th century;²⁴ suggesting the likelihood that carpenter's guides and pattern books were referenced in the planning and construction of Longwood.

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Longwood Louisa County, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

Furthermore, in its original design Longwood had a two-story, full-façade porch—a subtype evident in only one-fourth of Greek Revival houses²⁵ and a feature rarely found in rural Virginia architecture.²⁸ Although the original two-story porch is no longer standing, plans are underway by the current owner to fully restore the porch based on evidence available from historic photographs. Restoration plans also include rebuilding the original one-story porch on the rear elevation, and restoring shutters to the first and second floor windows of the house as evidenced in the historic photographs.

The architect or builder of Longwood remains undocumented; however, local tradition has attributed the design of the house to locally prominent master builder Benjamin Faulconer.²⁷ Several important buildings in Gordonsville are known to have been built by him or have been attributed to him, including the Exchange Hotel. The home of his brother, known as the E.J. Faulconer House, is documented as having been a product of his work.²⁸ Although smaller in its massing, the house bears a remarkable resemblance to Longwood. The Schlosser House, which is also attributed to Benjamin Faulconer, possesses a number of architectural features common to Longwood as well; thus, further supporting the assertion that Benjamin Faulconer is the builder of Longwood.

The Green Springs area of Louisa County where Longwood is located has been known for centuries as a region of exceptional fertility, prosperity, and beauty. ²⁹ In the mid-19th century the region was famous for its abundant wheat crops, and has been continuously farmed for over 200 years. Today, the region represents over two centuries of important architectural, agricultural and social history. The Green Springs Rural Historic District was established in recognition of this unique assemblage of outstanding architectural forms in a rural setting. While Longwood is not located within the boundaries of the Green Springs Rural Historic District, it shares a similar historic context to the properties within the district given that it was established and constructed during the same period of time as many of those properties in the district. Furthermore, Longwood also served in an important agricultural role during the time that George Gordon occupied the house.

Longwood has undergone very few changes since its construction, and today remains an excellent, well-preserved example of domestic Greek Revival architecture in Virginia. Although the property does not include all of its original acreage, in its present setting Longwood retains the quiet character of its original rural setting.

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Longwood Louisa County, VA

Endnotes

- 1. "Chancery File No. 154: Gordon v. Lewis" (Louisa, VA: Louisa County Clerks Office, 1918) Multiple documents, photocopied.
- 2. McAlester, Virginia and Lee, <u>A Field Guide to American Houses</u> (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 178-195.
- 3. Loundsbury, Carl R., ed., <u>An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape</u> (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 346.
- 4. "Chancery File No. 154: Gordon v. Lewis" (Louisa, VA: Louisa County Clerks Office, 1918)
 Multiple documents, photocopied.
- 5. Refer to historic photograph of Longwood taken circa 1920 submitted with nomination report.
- 6. McAlester, Virginia and Lee, <u>A Field Guide to American Houses</u> (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 179, 183.
- 7. Ibid., 182.
- 8. Hamlin, Talbot, <u>Greek Revival Architecture in America</u> (New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1964), back cover.
- 9. McAlester, Virginia and Lee, <u>A Field Guide to American Houses</u> (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 184.
- O'Dell, Jeff, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form: Gordonsville Historic District" (Richmond, VA: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 1983).
- 11. "Louisa County 1860 Census" (Provo, UT, MyFamily.com, 1999), 214.
- 12. "Descendents of William Fitzhugh Gordon, Tree No. 3888" (Family Tree Maker, version 9.0, Fremont, CA: Geneaology.com, 1996).
- 13. Thomas, William H.B., <u>Gordonsville, Virginia: Historic Crossroads Town</u> (Orange, VA: Green Publishers, 1971), 30.
- 14. Deed Book 1857-1860 (Louisa County, VA: Louisa County Clerks Office, 1859) 504-506.
- 15. "Chancery File No. 154: Gordon v. Lewis" (Louisa, VA: Louisa County Clerks Office, 1918) Multiple documents, photocopied.

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Longwood Louisa County, VA

Endnotes (continued)

- 16. "Descendents of William Fitzhugh Gordon, Tree No. 3888" (Family Tree Maker, version 9.0, Fremont, CA: Geneaology.com, 1996).
- 17. "Chancery File No. 154: Gordon v. Lewis" (Louisa, VA: Louisa County Clerks Office, 1918)
 Multiple documents, photocopied.
- 18. lbid.
- 19. Ibid.
- 20. McAlester, Virginia and Lee, <u>A Field Guide to American Houses</u> (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 182.
- 21. Ibid., 177.
- 22. Ibid., 178-195.
- 23. lbid., 180.
- 24. Downing, A.J., <u>The Architecture of Country Houses</u>, with an Introduction by J. Stewart Johnson (New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1969), 111 & 123.
- 25. McAlester, Virginia and Lee, <u>A Field Guide to American Houses</u> (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 179.
- 26. Ibid., 183.
- 27. Thomas, William H.B., <u>Gordonsville, Virginia: Historic Crossroads Town</u> (Orange, VA: Green Publishers, 1971), 70.
- 28. O'Dell, Jeff, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form: Gordonsville Historic District" (Richmond, VA: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 1983), 14-15.
- 29. Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form: Green Springs Historic District" (Richmond, VA: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 1973).

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Longwood Louisa County, VA

Major Bibliographic References

- "Chancery File No. 154: Gordon v. Lewis." Louisa, VA: Louisa County Clerks Office, 1918. Photocopied.
- "Descendents of William Fitzhugh Gordon, Tree No. 3888." Family Tree Maker, version 9.0. Fremont, CA: Geneaology.com 1996.
- Downing, A.J. <u>The Architecture of Country Houses</u>. With an Introduction by J. Stewart Johnson. New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1969.
- Golgosky, Nadine. "Virginia Department of Historic Resources Building Survey Form, Longwood, File No. 54-326." Richmond, VA: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 1993.
- Hamlin, Talbot. <u>Greek Revival Architecture in America</u>. New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1964.
- "Louisa County 1860 Census." MyFamily.com, Inc.: Provo, UT, 1999.
- Loundsbury, Carl R., ed. <u>An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture</u>. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1999.
- McAlester, Virginia and Lee. <u>A Field Guide to American Houses</u>. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984; reprint, 1992.
- O'Dell, Jeff. "National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form: Gordonsville Historic District." Richmond, VA: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 1983.
- Thomas, William H. B. <u>Gordonsville</u>, <u>Virginia</u>: <u>Historic Crossroads Town</u>. Orange, VA: Green Publishers, 1971; reprint, 1980.
- Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff. "National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form: Green Springs Historic District." Richmond, VA: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 1973.
- Wong, Brian, owner of Longwood. Interview by Alison Dayton, 19 November 2001, Gordonsville, VA.

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Longwood Louisa County, VA

Verbal Boundary Description

Boundaries are indicated on the accompanying base map, *Plat Survey of 121.198 Acres "Longwood"*, dated 8 November 2001. The property is identified as parcel number 20-666 on the tax parcel maps for Louisa County, Virginia.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the house, buildings, fields and other resources that have historically been part of the Longwood estate and that continue to enhance the integrity of the rural historic property.

